



COMMUNICATOR

Desert Regional Center

Issue 4

December 2007

Happy Holidays To DRC from the Regional Director

Nancy Knox

It is hard to believe that another year has passed. It has been another whirlwind year for many of us. We have had our share of challenges, and it is good to start a new fresh year! DRC continues to grow dynamically, and all of you have continued to work diligently to provide the services and supports to our almost 3000 individuals in service. We had a busy year with the new budget FY 08-09 presentations, and we were pleased at the substantial increase that was approved for new services. Unfortunately that has been short-lived; we have learned that the tax receipts have not been enough to pay for the new and additional services to our individuals. We have had the task of finding ways to trim our budget by 8%! This is a substantial amount and it has been quite a difficult assignment. Our ideas will be reviewed by our administration in Carson City and by the Governor's staff. Decisions will be made and we will continue to do what we do to support people. We will tighten our belts, and continue to provide the best services we can! We have been through this on a few occasions in the past years. It is not pleasant, but we have always been able to do what needs to be done to serve the people in greatest need. Many of you will be asked to make sacrifices, and everyone will be asked to conserve



more. Our Providers must be our partners in this endeavor, as we cannot do this without their assistance. We will all be waiting to learn of who our new Administrator and Deputy will be to help lead us in 2008 in our mission to serve our individuals. That will be determined in the next few months. I am sure we all wish Dr. Brandenburg and Debbie Hosselkus the best of luck in their retirement. They have done a tremendous job in shaping and supporting our services to people with disabilities.

I want to thank each of you for your dedication and attention to a job well done during 2007. I won't single anyone out, as there are too many great DRC staff to mention here, from the Technicians, Buildings and Grounds, Maintenance, Support and Business staff, and Professional staff. You are all the greatest group of people I have had the pleasure to work with. I am so appreciative of what you do.

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Santa to Visit DRC Campus



Santa will be making his annual stop at the DDC campus on December 18th at 6 pm. Keep your eyes wide open for his sleigh. He will be delivering gifts to everyone.

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Happy Holidays from Personnel



Enjoy Your Holidays

us a copy for your personnel file. If you want to change your beneficiary for your last pay check, you may do so online through NEATS, or you may get the form from our office and we will assist you with your change. If you make the change online, please print the screen and sign your name authorizing the change and submit it to our office for processing. If you want to make a change to your beneficiary for your life insurance, please access the website for Standard Insurance Company and download the beneficiary designation form. Complete the form, make a copy for your personnel file and mail the form to Standard Insurance. The website for Standard Insurance is; <http://www.standard.com/mybenefits/nevada/>.

We would like to remind employees to be safety conscious at all times and to be aware of your surroundings. Burning candles and the use of extension cords are prohibited so please follow the rules and help to ensure a safe working environment for everyone!

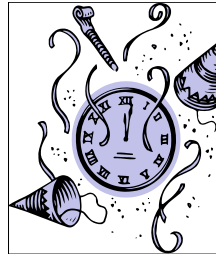
Here is a little DRC personnel trivia for your information. We had eight employees retire from DRC in 2007 with a combined total of 183 years of state service! Congratulations to all retirees, you are missed! The average age of DRC employees is 47 and the average years of state service is 9.15. We are just above the state average employee age which is 45.87 and the state average years of service which is 8.52. We have approximately 228 filled positions and of the 228, 147 employees have less than ten years of state service, 86 have less than five years of state service, 24 have more than 20 years, and 2 have more than 30 years. These figures do not include any purchased retirement service, as I do not have access to that information. Hopefully our employees will stay with DRC and accumulate several more years of state service! Happy Holidays!

Dottie Martin

Why New Year's Resolutions Don't Work

Based upon work by Marnie Greenberg

Submitted by Dr. Brian Lech



Here we go again, starting the year with the very best of intentions. So what does your try-it-again list of resolutions include? A year filled with daily exercise, weight loss, a streamlined budget, paid off credit cards, more time with friends and family, and more success on the job?

You bet. You mean it this time. So why five minutes into the New Year are we munching on chips or lighting up a cigarette? It seems that we blow off our resolutions as readily as we make them.

What tips do the experts give us for handling 2008 differently? Here are a few: Be realistic, write your resolutions down, set deadlines, change only one to two things at a time, be specific, think positively, be committed, plan and pace yourself, learn from past mistakes, and best of all, sign up for daily e-mail messages that support and encourage you.

Although these may offer some slight improvement over years past, the real problem is that we are not very resolute creatures (probably by nature). True, January 1 is a fine time to start anew and set goals; but a truer truth is that ANY DATE is the best time to start working towards an objective. The trick is to make it a *daily* goal-not a yearly one. Why? *When* not if you slip (i.e. mess up) you don't have to wait until 2009 to start again. Pick it back up right away. People with addictions don't get 20 years of sobriety by planning on it. They do it one day at a time. Just build in some extra incentives in the beginning of your journey and you too can be on your way to a positive lifestyle change.



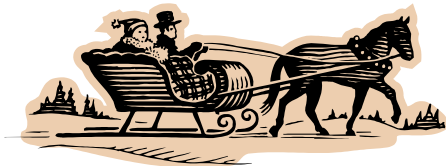


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I want to wish you and your loved ones the Happiest of Holidays. God Bless us all and give us strength to keep doing what we do every day so well.

Happy 2008, may it bring good health, good fortune and much happiness to everyone at DRC!!!

Nancy Knox



DRC Community put out a request for food donations to our staff for Thanksgiving for the needy families DRC serves. As you can see we had a very bighearted response, and more came in after that! Fifteen needy families were able to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. A big **thank you** to the staff that donated food and extended themselves beyond the call of duty to ensure the families they serve were able to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner!



CAMPUS NEWS

by Scott Anderson



Fall activities that happened here on the DRC campus. The largest and most attended event was the birthday bash for Jennifer who lives in home 1302S. She threw a party in 1307 that was attended by nearly 20 people. Many of her family and friends came to share sno-cones, cupcakes, music and good company. Many of the homes have people who are regularly attending church on Sundays and they seem to be enjoying it. People living in homes 1302 North and South made several joint trips to the outlying parks such as Floyd Lamb and Red Rock. Tashina will be attending the Mama Mia show at Mandalay Bay this week. The winter months will bring a slew of family visits including one for Mark who will be flying all the way to North Carolina to be with his family for the holidays. **HAPPY HOLIDAYS** to everyone.



Congratulations to the following employees for years of service with the State of Nevada.

20 Years

Mark Kagan

15 Years

Carolyn Weeks

10 Years

Shelli O'Donnell

Rhonda Johnson

Lourdes "Lou" Wong

Evelyn Oberes

Rochelle Herst

Patricia Ryan

5 Years

Sheila Garner

Tyrone Hoard

Diane Brown

CONGRATULATIONS to Diane Brown who recently received her BA in Human Services



DRC Staff Takes a Walk...



Nevada Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI)

Harrah's Hotel and Casino invited the Desert Regional Center to join them for the NAMI walk on October 13, 2007 at UNLV. The walk was to raise donations and awareness for individuals who have a diagnosis of mental illness and their families.

Mirian Ferreira, Diane Brown, Wipha Monterio (Harrah's IT), Ed Miller (Harrah's Security Department), Toni Clay, Lisa Sherych, Denise Mageau, (Sandy's daughter) and Sandy Linton are pictured above prior to the walk. Haidy Castillo, Krayl Willette, and Krayl's stepdaughter Jessica also participated - but just missed the photo op. There was also a lot of other Harrah's folks participating, and our team took 5th place for both volume of people participating and money donated.

Sign in was at 7:30 a.m. and the 3 mile walk started at 9 a.m. – and may we add we were quite pleased to have completed this 3 mile hike in 50 minutes! Lisa Sherych was way ahead of the pack, so we can guess she beat that by 10 or so minutes. (Show off – I mean – good job Lisa!!)

This walk was very easy, before we knew it we were back home. The participants were spoiled with Starbucks coffee, Einstein bagels, juices, water, and that was before we even started. There was an array of local celebrities and entertainment including Karate demonstrations, dance groups, Las Vegas strip entertainers, and news anchor Charlotte Evans (Channel 8 KLAS). Pizza, fruit, and frozen desserts were provided for everyone when the walk was finished.

The Mental Health Court team took first place for highest donations generated. We hope to see you all there next year!!

Diane Brown and Mirian Ferreira

"Even if your on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there:"

Will Rogers



Boost Your Nutrients

Tahmineh Ronagh-Langroodi, MS, RD



Carotenoids are powerful antioxidants that help protect the body from damaging compounds. They have also been shown to promote healthy vision. Carotenoids like alphacarotene, beta-

carotene, lutein, and lycopene are found in red, yellow, and orange fruits, and dark green leafy vegetables. Dietary fats play an important role in the body's absorption of carotenoids. However, many fruits and vegetables rich in carotenoids are also fat-free. This may limit the body's ability to absorb some of these nutrients. Research suggests that the natural "heart healthy" fat found in avocados increases the body's ability to absorb and use carotenoids. A recent study reported that avocados, added to salad and salsa act as a nutrient boost by increasing carotenoid absorption. In the study, people who consumed salad containing 75g of avocado (equivalent to half of a medium avocado) absorbed 8 times more alpha-carotene, 13 times more beta-carotene, and 4 times more lutein. In addition, people who consumed salsa with 150g (equivalent to 1 medium avocado) of avocado absorbed 4 times more lycopene, which has been linked to prostate cancer protection. Ounce for ounce, nutrient dense avocados provide more fiber, magnesium, potassium, glutathione (a phytochemical that acts as a **Boost Your Nutrients**).

Boost Nutrient Absorption with Avocados

Avocados are naturally rich in monounsaturated fat and omega-3 fatty acids—"good fats"—that can help protect against heart disease. New research also suggests that avocados may help your body absorb and use important nutrients like carotenoids.

Enjoy Ripe Avocados

Ripening: Store avocados in a fruit bowl on the kitchen counter. To accelerate ripening, place avocados in a paper bag with an apple for 2 to 3 days at room temperature. When they darken and yield to gentle pressure, they're ready to eat.

Tips for Handling:

1. Like all fruits and vegetables, wash the ripe avocado before cutting.
2. Cut the avocado length-wise around the seed.
3. Twist the halves in opposite directions to separate.
4. Slip a spoon between the seed and the fruit and work the seed out.
5. Slip a spoon between the skin and fruit and scoop away from the peel.

Storage Tips:

Ripe avocados can be stored in a refrigerator or freezer for later use as a spread for sandwiches—or for a tasty dip.

- Simply mash the remaining fruit in a covered storage container.
- Add 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice per 1/2 mashed avocado to prevent discoloration and enhance flavor.
- Lay plastic wrap directly on the surface of the mixture before covering. Refrigerate a maximum of two days.
- Label container and use within two months if you store it in a freezer.

Avocados fit into delicious dishes including salads, salsas and soups. Create healthy avocado salsa for a festive appetizer and benefit from a nutrient boost.

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Avocados continued from page 5



Authentic Avocado Salsa

(Makes 12 servings)

- 2 ripe avocados, seeded and peeled
- 1 Tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1/3 cup diced tomato, seeded and well drained
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 1 Serrano chili, chopped and seeded
- 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Preparation:

Cut avocados into 1/2-inch cubes. Stir in lime juice. Fold in remaining ingredients. Salsa is best made as close to serving as possible. For short-term storage, seal in an airtight container with a piece of plastic wrap against the surface of the salsa. Serve with crudités or baked tortilla chips.

Nutrients per serving (1 serving = 3 Tbsp):

Calories 50; total fat 4.5g (saturated fat 1.0g; polyunsaturated fat 1.0g; monounsaturated fat 2.5g); protein 1g; total carbohydrates 4g; dietary fiber 3g; cholesterol 0mg; sodium 100mg; vitamin A 4%DV; vitamin C 40%DV; calcium 0%DV; iron 0%DV antioxidant).

The fact sheet is sponsored by the California Avocado Commission. The contents have been reviewed by the American Dietetic Association's Fact Sheet Review Board.



Welcome New Staff

Roxanne Fuchs, Developmental Support Technician working in home 1309. Roxanne has live in California, Hawaii and off and on in Las Vegas since 1979. Her interests include music, building websites, computers and poker. Her brother is serving a 3rd tour in Iraq now for the US Army.

Bonnie Kitman, Psychiatric Nurse II working for Community Services in the Flamingo satellite office. She is originally from New Jersey living in Las Vegas for 5 years. She is married and has two children. She enjoys boating and reading.

Jim Kolar, Maintenance Repair Worker III. He is originally from Minnesota and has lived in Las Vegas for 3 1/2 years. He is married with two sons and enjoys hockey, golf, football and fishing.

Nikita Noel-Smith, Developmental Specialist II working for Community Services in the Flamingo satellite office. She has two children and has lived in Las Vegas for 1 year. Her interests include visiting inmates and teaching life alternatives.

Lynn Quinteros, Developmental Specialist III working for Community Services in the Flamingo satellite office. Lynn is originally from Sewell, New Jersey and has lived in Las Vegas for 5 years. She is married and her interests include Christian Faith, traveling, cultural events and arts.

Mary Ramsey, Developmental Specialist III working for Community Services in the Flamingo satellite office. She is originally from Wisconsin but has lived in Las Vegas for 20 years. She has a newly wed son and daughter-in-law. She enjoys reading mysteries, watching football and is a member of the Silver State Kennel Club.

Leni Raga, Accounting Assistant II working in the business office. Leni is from the Philippines and has lived in Las Vegas for 9 years. She is married and has one daughter. She enjoys cooking and reading.

Rogel Valles, Maintenance Repair Specialist I. Rogel is from the Philippines and has lived in Las Vegas with his brand new wife for 6 months. He enjoys playing tennis.



New Vista Community, Moving and Growing

Michelle Jackson

In April this year New Vista Community opened a new program that offers respite to individuals and their families in Las Vegas that are intellectually challenged. The program provides opportunities for individuals to participate in day trips, weekend get-a-aways, and even week long excursions that are educational, safe, and FUN! Destination Discovery is really becoming a mainstay for caregivers to have a chance to get a break from the support they provide their intellectually challenged family members each day.

Individuals and caregivers can get more information on the Destination Discovery Respite Program by visiting www.NewVistaCommunity.org.

While New Vista is building up their new program they have also just recently purchased a new building for their corporate offices and Emporium Store.

"We have had so much growth over the last 2 years that we were bursting at the seams at our old location," says Michelle Jackson, Director of Development. "Now we will have room to accommodate that growth and continue growing."

New Vista Community's new building is located at 5220 W. Charleston Blvd. between Decatur and Jones. They anticipate the Emporium Store being open to shoppers by December 1, 2007 just in time for holiday shopping. You can find a variety of new and used items ranging from furniture, household items, holiday décor, and clothing. The Emporium also accepts and picks up your gently used donations. Give them a call at 702-457-4677 and ask for Dana.

New Vista Community is committed to providing the intellectually challenged of all ages with equal opportunities and support so that they may experience life to the fullest.

Save the Date

**PEOPLE FIRST OF NEVADA
STATEWIDE CONFERENCE
"Living Our Own Dreams"
April 6-8, 2008
Circus Circus
Las Vegas, NV**

Don't forget to change your e-mail password

On the rare occasions when e-mail goes down, we suddenly realize how dependant we have become. Unfortunately, if you don't change your password before the January 3rd deadline, your e-mail account will be locked out. If you haven't already changed your password, please take two minutes and go through the simple steps.

The web site is <https://mail.state.nv.us/empowerid/mypassword/> enter your username (the first part of your e-mail address) then enter your password (provided by the DRC Tech Team). Click **Change password** and follow the instruction on the page. Later, when you open Microsoft Outlook, you may be required to enter the new password.

If you need assistance please contact the DRC Tech Team at 486-6258 DRCHelpdesk@drc.nv.gov.



Community Services Department Faces New Challenges in 2008

By Sandy Linton, Community Services Director

Time flies! I can't believe I've been the community services director for two years now. I am very fortunate to work with such a wonderfully supportive team and capable staff and to have a regional director who is supportive of my work.

As we continue to receive referrals from the juvenile court system, Toni Clay and Dr. Brian Lech have done an excellent job of keeping the courts advised of our services. We now have an established working relationship with several of the judges. Toni and Brian spend a lot of their time working with both the juvenile court system as well as with the adult system. Thank you Toni and Brian for all your hard work on this!

Shelly Lech, heads up our JDT program. She has done a fantastic job keeping this program on track and within budget. Bravo, Shelly!

Tanya Griffith manages our POS program that has an annual budget of approximately \$350,000. She is responsible for the allocation of this money and for keeping up with what is returned unused so these monies can be re-allocated.

Leslie Brown, Winnie Wong, Jeanene Russell and I all manage the SLA budget which is in excess of \$37,000,000. While that may sound like a lot of money, remember we have almost 1,000 people in placement. What makes this budget so difficult to manage is that it varies from month to month depending on how much is billed. Also 51% of this money is matched by federal funds which we get only after we've spent our state dollars.

Michele Ferrall manages the Self Directed Autism Services program with a budget of about \$879,000. Not only does Michele manage this

budget, she also continues to place people on this program as outlined by our division. She has done an excellent job. Thank you, Michelle, for all of your help.

Sharon Christian supervises the Henderson office and is also our training officer for community services. Sharon is responsible for overseeing the development of training for our professional staff and assists division in the management of the training budget. She is also responsible for getting the library reserved for our staff meetings which I truly appreciate. The most recent to join our supervisory group is Angela Moein. Angela is an excellent trainer of our new staff. She is also a member of the Cooperatively Served Individuals (CSI) committee. This committee works with staff from mental health in an ongoing effort to provide the best services to people who have a dual diagnosis and are also in need mental health services.

I want to also take this opportunity to thank Lisa Selthofner, Chief of Quality Assurance, for all the work she and her department does to support community services; to Dr. Thomas Smith, who will co-manage community services with me as we continue to downsize the campus. Two supervisors were recently transferred to his supervision, Michele Ferrall and Sharon Christian. I also want to thank our accounting department who check and double check our contracts to assure that they are correct and current.

I cannot begin to mention all staff in this newsletter individually but I do want to thank all of you for all your hard work and caring for the people we support.



How are We Doing? Survey Says...

By Tara Walker

During the last quarter we received 242 Satisfaction Surveys. The following are some of the comments that people have sent regarding their appreciation of our services.

A mother writes “**Mike Mikkelsen** is a wonderful resource to our family. He is great.” Other family members write regarding **Jeff Shaw**, “The program has helped our family tremendously. **Jeff Shaw** is always available and extremely helpful. I’m pleased with the program. Our family appreciates the services DRC is able to provide thanks to the program.” “Since I started with DRC, it’s been great, especially my coordinator **Jeff**.” “Our case worker, **Jeff**, has been very helpful.” About **Rocky Harshman**, one mother writes, “I’d like to take this opportunity to say thank you so much. All the services you have provided have been such a blessing. **Rocky Harshman** has been wonderful getting us all that is available to us. He is always prompt in response to my needs and even calls to check up on my son’s needs when I don’t call. **Rocky** is great. Thank you again staff at Desert Regional Center for the help you have given my son and our family.” Another mother states, “I’m very happy with **Mike Cannon’s** services and I’d like to keep him as long as I can.”

Here are some more comments we received from family members. One mother stated that “I am quite satisfied with the services we have received from DRC. Any concerns I have had been completely addressed by my son’s worker, **Todd Pehrson** at all times.” One mother says, “**Susan Banks** has helped us so much with my son. She is very supportive and always there when we need help. Her moral supports have helped us a lot to go through all of the things we experienced with our son.” A grandmother states, “**Susan** has helped me with many questions and was able to transfer my grandson to another school that fit his needs.” A mother writes regarding **Courtney White**, “We as a family greatly appreciate everything our DRC representative has helped us with. Not only are the needs of our disabled child met, but our whole family feels supported. Thank you for all your assistance and care.” “**Heidi Boehm** is exceptional and does so much and is a truly fine representative of DRC whose services we just couldn’t even think about doing without” states a mother.

Here are a few statements regarding some of our providers. “My sister’s quality of life has been greatly enhanced because of her experience at **Portals**. The well rounded and varied experiences leave nothing to be desired.” “Overall I’m satisfied with **BAI** and the staff. I’m really pleased because I believe that **Nate Boyack**, **Ray Reece** and **Steven Bond** genuinely have my son’s best interest at heart. I appreciate you guys.” One individual receiving services writes, “I am comfortable working with staff and **DRC** and **BAI**. Services at **BAI** are good. They are showing us how to do my own shopping and my own apartment cleaning and money management.” A mother writes, “**OVI** seems to fully understand my son’s challenges (Autism) and is able to accommodate his needs in his vocational setting.” “**Transitions** is the best at bringing out my son’s abilities, states another mother.



GREAT WORK EVERYONE AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

Desert Regional Center

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We're on the WEB
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Nancy Knox, Director

Sandy Linton, CS Director

Tom Smith, Residential Director

Lisa Selthofner, QA Chief

Brian Lech, Psychology Director

Darrel Hansen, Business Manager

Dottie Martin, Personnel Director

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the agency is supporting individuals in achieving a life of meaning, equality, dignity, opportunity, and inclusion in the community.

Beverly Zemcik, Editor
Please send comments to:
bzemcik@drc.nv.gov

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO
EVERYONE**



Be Careful What you Wish For

I wish I was 6 again...

A man was sitting on the edge of the bed, observing his wife, looking at herself in the mirror. Since her birthday was not far off he asked what she'd like to have for her Birthday. "I'd like to be six again", she replied, still looking in the mirror. On the morning of her Birthday, he arose early, made her a nice big bowl of Lucky Charms, and then took her to Six Flags theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park; the Death Slide, the Wall of Fear, the Screaming Monster Roller Coaster, everything there was. Five hours later they staggered out of the theme park. Her head was reeling and her stomach felt upside down. He then took her to a McDonald's where he ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a chocolate shake. Then it was off to a movie, popcorn, a soda pop, and her favorite candy, M&M's.

What a fabulous adventure! Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed exhausted. He leaned over his wife with a big smile and lovingly asked, "Well Dear, what was it like being six again?" Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed. **"I meant my dress size!"**